The Dynamic Decade 1927–1937

DECENNIAL
CELEBRATION

REDEDICATING

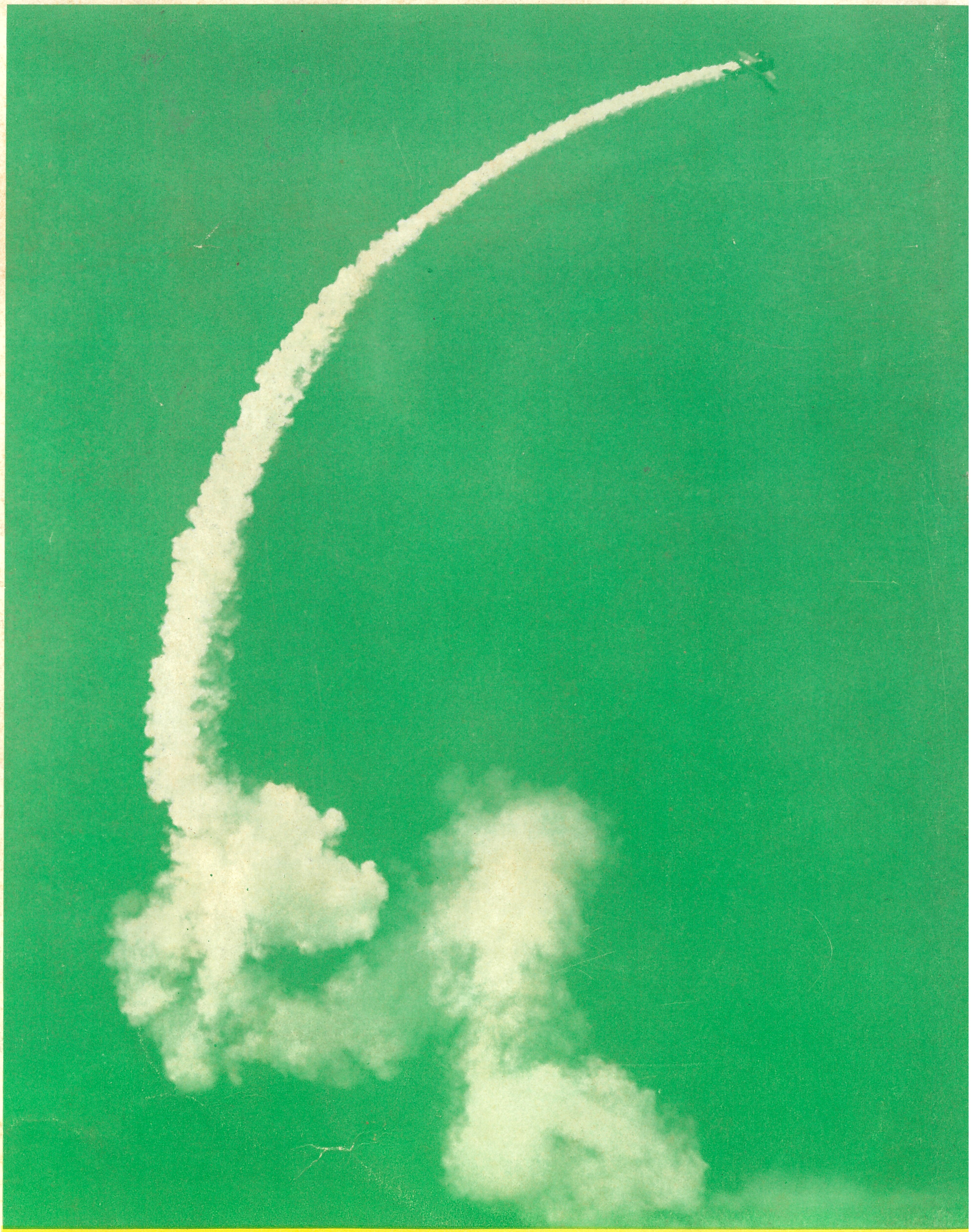
LINDLEY
FIELD

GREENSBORO-
HIGH POINT
AIRPORT

MAY 28th-29th
1937

KING COTTON
HOTEL

GREENSBORO
NORTH
CAROLINA



WRITING HISTORY ON TOMORROW'S SKIES

The
Dynamic Decade

•

A decade of spectacular highs and desperate lows — business battling with its back to the wall — society shifting to unprecedented levels — science exploiting new frontiers — necessity borning a new civilization.

A decade now disappearing into the distance — a new one dimly discerned on the horizon. A greater, a finer community is emerging.

We take a "back sight" that we may get a surer perspective of the future — that we may catch our stride to breast the tape in the swift race that lies just ahead.

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The research and style of Neil M. Clark and the courtesy of Nation's Business are gratefully acknowledged.

THE DYNAMIC DECADE

1927 ✣ 1937

PIONEERS PAINTED A BACKGROUND AGAINST WHICH WE BUILDED

In 1920 Charlie Myers barnstormed into Greensboro just after the World War, cracked up, and stayed on to build a plane for E. P. Wharton, banker. Messrs. Wharton, Morton, Myers, and other enthusiasts who flew in it were considered reckless and crack-brained.

In those days you could not go to a "talkie" — see a news reel — ride a stream lined train — shop in an air-conditioned store — own a modern automobile — get long distance in a few seconds — talk to London — fly from the Statue of Liberty to the Golden Gate overnight — ride in a self-levelling elevator — send mail and express by air — freeze ice cubes — offer a woman a cigarette safely — buy anything wrapped in cellophane — shave with an electric razor — get paid for not raising crops — cook in glass dishes — buy a glass dress — get a farm loan — buy a tabloid paper — carve with stainless steel.

May 16th, 1919 — three navy seaplanes left Newfoundland — one N. C. 4 reached the Azores next day — Lisbon on May 27th — and England on May 31st. On June 14th, 1919, John Alcock and A. W. Brown flew from Newfoundland to Ireland — the first non-stop Atlantic crossing. Less than one in 100 people had ever seen an aeroplane in the air.

Automobiles were still feared by the timorous and thrifty. Roads were treacherous — wireless was a curiosity — radio phones did not come until 1921 and the first wire photos were sent in 1924, but not until 1935 was a voice sent round the world.

May 9th, 1912, the first aeronautical Exposition was held in New York — fragile biplanes and goggled birdmen. The first transcontinental flight in 1912 took 49 days — actual flying time three days — ten hours — four minutes.

(January 19th, 1937 — Howard Hughes flew non-stop from Los Angeles to New York in 7 hours — 28 minutes — 25 seconds — and this month Dick Merrill flew the Atlantic non-stop round trip with news reels of the Hindenburg disaster and pictures of the coronation of George VI — average time — 175 miles per hour.)

May 15th, 1918, the first air mail was established by the Government. Passenger service began when two timid women were flown from New York to Atlantic City. Came endurance flights — overseas flights — the North Pole was crossed in the air — and on May 27th just ten years ago came a young birdman out of the west, rested momentarily on Long Island, and pressed on across the Atlantic — the first human to ever do it alone — landed in Paris amid joyous, tearful crowds — modestly presented himself to Ambassador Herrick — said "I am Charles Lindbergh"—"We" had made history.

Came Airports — radio beams — beacons — lighted airways — automatic pilots — regular service to South America — then across the Pacific — in 1935 air lines carried 746,946 passengers — clipper ships flew 541,200 trans-Pacific miles their first year of service — 66 trips — with more passengers offered than could be accommodated.

Arranged in alphabetical order and without regard for relative prominence are listed below those who helped to make aviation history in our community. These names are not set down for credit since no one nor all together could have accomplished what has been done without the united cooperation of many organizations and individuals. But all who have had a part may now have the satisfaction which comes of successful achievement.

None were active in all periods—some were in many—others in few where special talents were vital—all gave unstintingly. A grateful community acknowledges their contributions with sincere appreciation.

There were seven stages: 1—pioneer; 2—early air mail; 3—early passenger; 4—expansion; 5—cancellation and chaos; 6—modernization; 7 restoration.

PIONEER PERIOD

John Alcock
A. W. Brown
Glenn Curtis
E. B. Jeffress
Ed Klingman
Ruth Law
Frank P. Morton
Charlie Myers
Capt. E. K. Patterson
Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker
E. P. Wharton
Orville Wright

TRI-CITY COMMITTEES

Greensboro

Hazel Hardin
E. B. Jeffress
Chas. M. Ketchum
Claude Kiser
Geo. L. Stansbury

High Point

T. D. Gilliam
J. E. Marsh, Jr.
W. B. McEwen
Fred McPherson
C. B. Overman
J. C. Siceloff
F. J. Sizemore

Winston-Salem

Major J. S. Kuykendall
Clarence Leinbach
Paul N. Montague
Wm. T. Ritter

EARLY AIR MAIL PERIOD

Grady L. Bain
Pete Branson
Gene Brown
Jas. N. Duncan
Mrs. O. H. Ellison
J. A. Gawthrop
P. A. Hayes
L. H. Hole
E. B. Jeffress
Donald Johnston
Chas. M. Ketchum
R. R. King, Jr.
Johnny Kytle
Paul C. Lindley
Sid Malloy
Dick Merrill
E. J. Morrissey
Harold Pitcairn
P. C. Painter
James Ray
James Reid
Fred Schwamle
J. W. Simpson
Geo. L. Stansbury
Verne Treat
Ray Warren

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

W. Irving Glover
Wm. P. McCracken
Major Chas. M. Steadman
Hon. Frank P. Woods

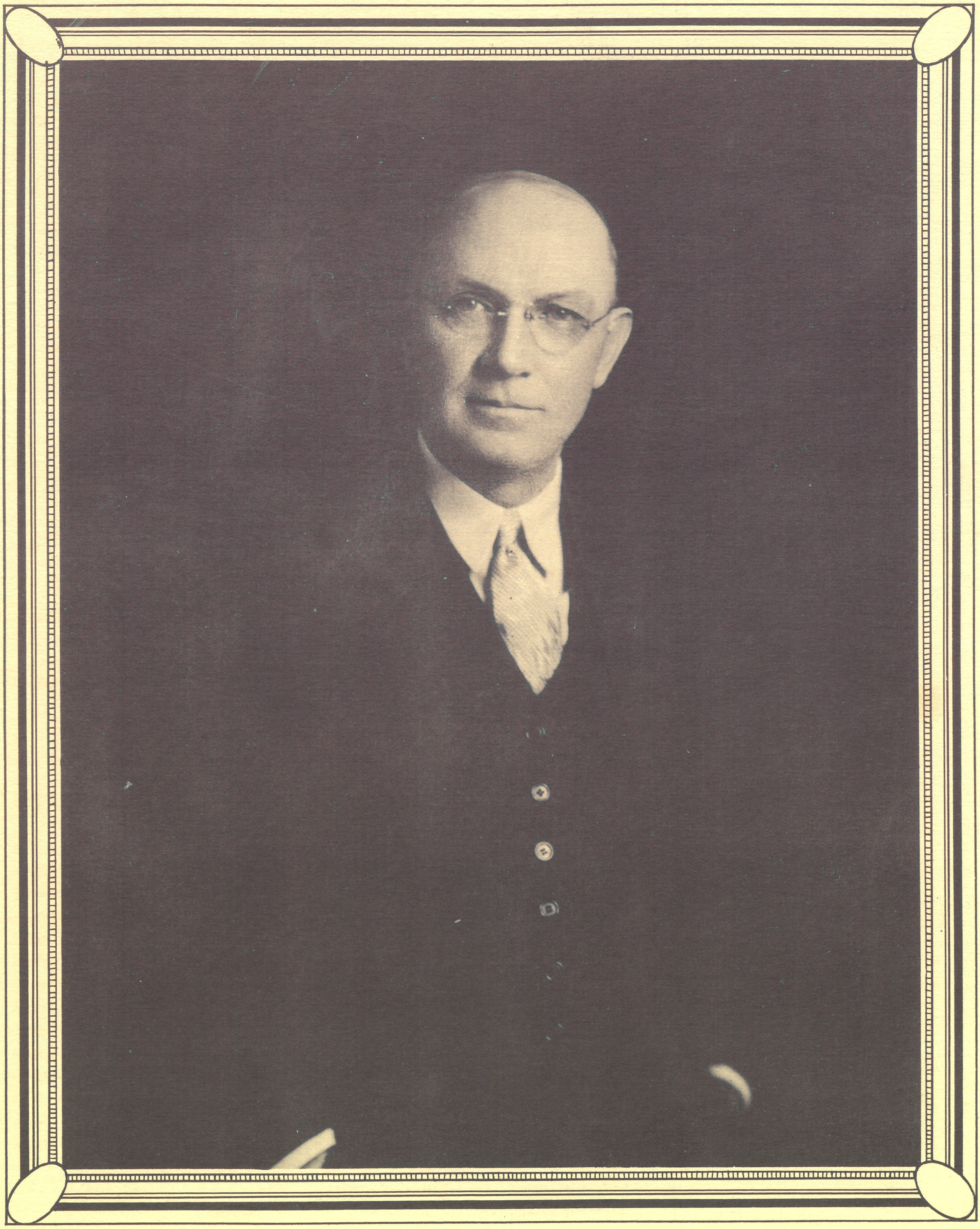
Five weeks to cross the continent by auto — came good roads — better automobiles — tin can tourists — camp grounds — tourist cottages — tourist homes — the trailer —"trailer towns"— hotels wake up — (drive in below — sleep above) — a moving, space-belittling world. Busses carried 475,000,000 revenue passengers in 1936. Trucks connected marooned hamlets with metropolii. The railroads cussed, restricted, controlled, chastened also awoke. New trains, rubber cushioned — light steel alloys, diesel engines, high speed — eat, sleep, drink, smoke, in air-conditioned comfort. The first radio broadcast in East Pittsburgh in 1920 — KDKA in 1921 — WJAZ — WHY and WEAT in 1922 — NBC Chain in 1926 and CBS in 1927. (8,000,000 radio sets were sold in 1936.) Harding-Cox — "back to normalcy" — limitation of armaments — prohibition amendment — tomb of the unknown soldier — King Tutankhamen — Judge Landis — — Will Hayes — Baseball and Movie Czars — Teapot Dome — Mussolini's Black shirts — Mah Jong — bobbed hair — bathing beauty contest — women smoke in public — beauty shops — flappers — speak easys and hip flasks — Ku Klux Klan — ethyl gas — "Babbitt".

Refueling in mid-air — Shenandoah chirstened — late in 1925 the Congress authorized the Postmaster General to contract with private parties for carrying air mail: (passenger development was left to individual initiative).

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND BEGINS THE DYNAMIC DECADE

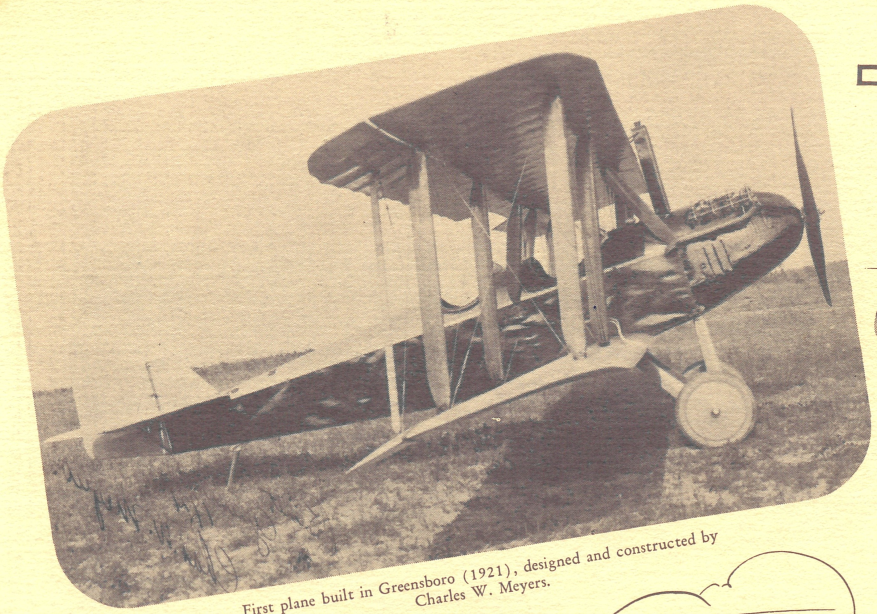
On the day the Airmail Act went into effect E. B. Jeffress induced the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce to take the initiative, which it did by projecting the Southern Airmail Association to promote an Airmail service from New York to New Orleans via Greensboro and from Atlanta to Jacksonville and Miami. This effort was abortive — (one metropolitan Chamber wrote — "Our budget is so limited, our program so large — and airmail so remote and uncertain that we cannot join you now").

The Tri-City Airmail Committee (Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem) was formed to carry on. Maj. J. S. Kuykendall circulated a petition asking the Post Office Department to establish Airmail in the South and secured the signatures of all Postmasters along the line originally proposed. An elaborate brief in support of this petition was prepared and filed with the Department, which agreed to authorize the line if a qualified contractor could be found to bid for it. The Government promoted line from New York to San Francisco had been taken over by Colonel Paul Henderson, who as Assistant Postmaster General, had developed it. Pitcairn Aviation was then carrying passengers in single motored planes between Washington, D. C., and Philadelphia, in connection with the Philadelphia Sesqui-Centennial Celebration. Florida Airways was operating a passenger service between Miami and Jacksonville. An effort was made to consolidate these two, but the latter service was discontinued before negotiations were well underway. Harold Pitcairn and G. S. Childs agreed to bid for the New York-Atlanta line provided it could be lighted for night flying. This called for a Congressional appropriation of $60,000 and cooperation by the Department of Commerce. Both were secured — the line was lighted —

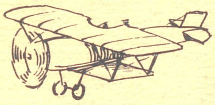


PAUL C. LINDLEY

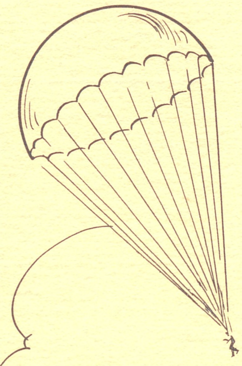
Dedicated to the late Paul C. Lindley, Airport Pioneer. Former President of Greensboro Chamber of Commerce and Mayor of City of Greensboro for whom Lindley Field (Greensboro-High Point Airport) was named.

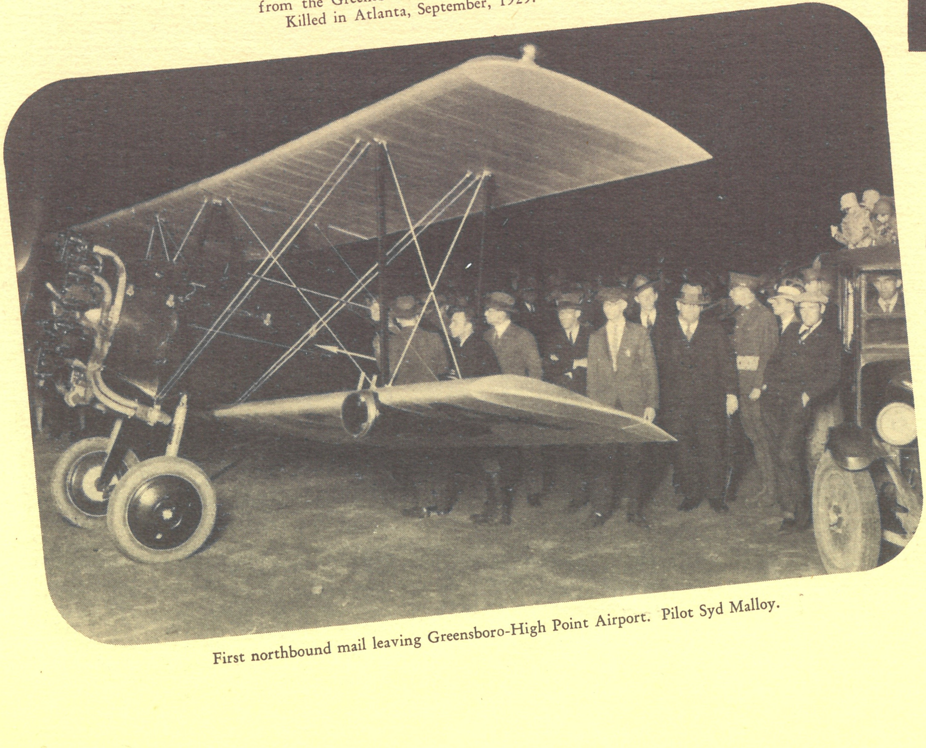


First plane built in Greensboro (1921), designed and constructed by Charles W. Meyers.



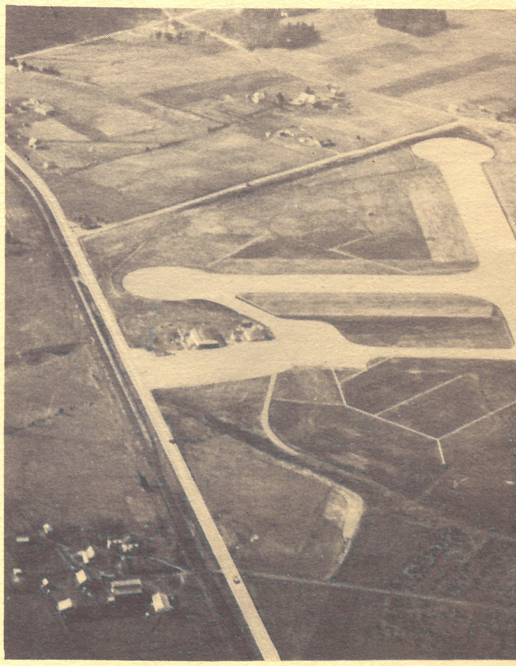
Pilot Syd Malloy who flew the first northbound mail from the Greensboro-High Point Airport. Killed in Atlanta, September, 1929.



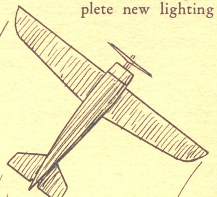


First northbound mail leaving Greensboro-High Point Airport. Pilot Syd Malloy.

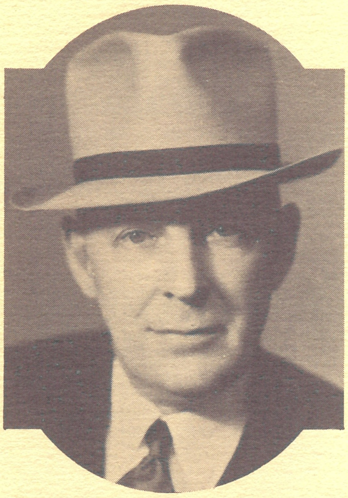
E. B. Jeffress conceived and helped to promote the New York-Atlanta Air Mail line.



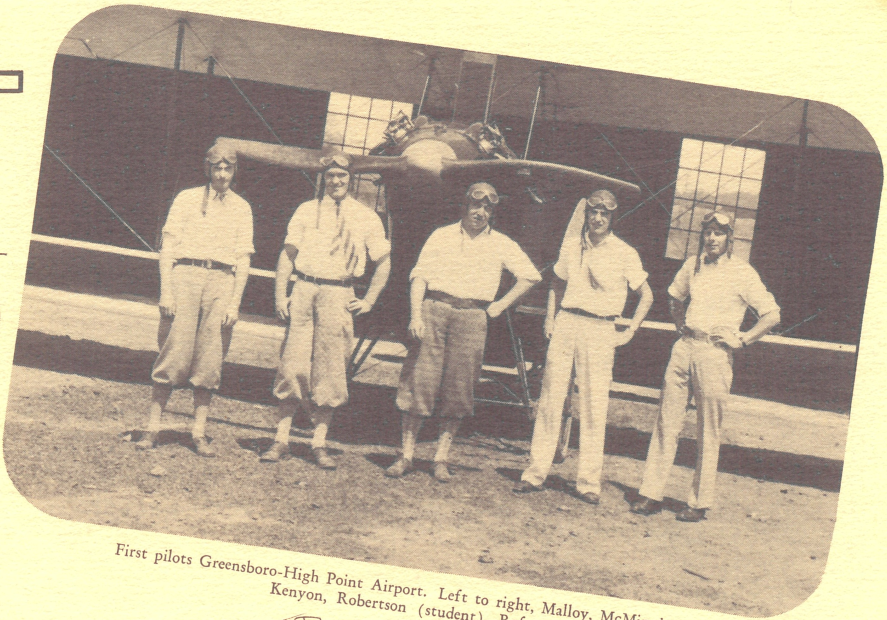
Greensboro-High Point Airport showing the new hal
plete new lighting system, enlarged Administration



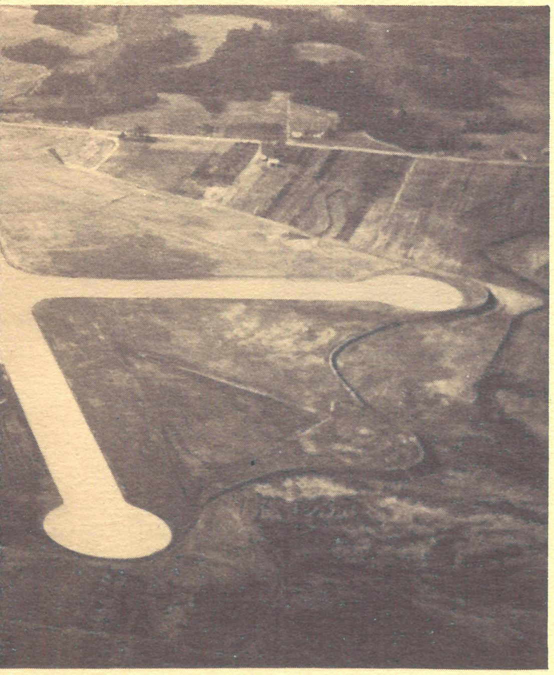
Henry W. Rafus, first pilot
now General Manag
High Poi



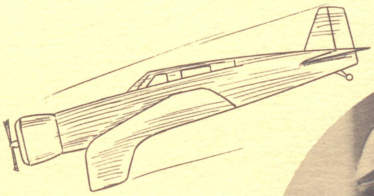
Charles M. Ketchum, coordinator of organization and individual forces.

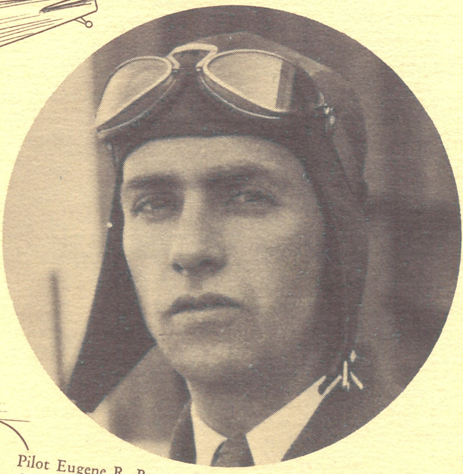


First pilots Greensboro-High Point Airport. Left to right, Malloy, McMinnimum, Kenyon, Robertson (student), Rafus.



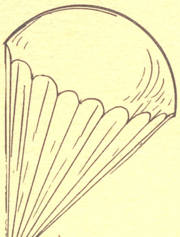
f million dollar improvements. Asphalt runways, com-
Building. Now one of the finest airports in the East.

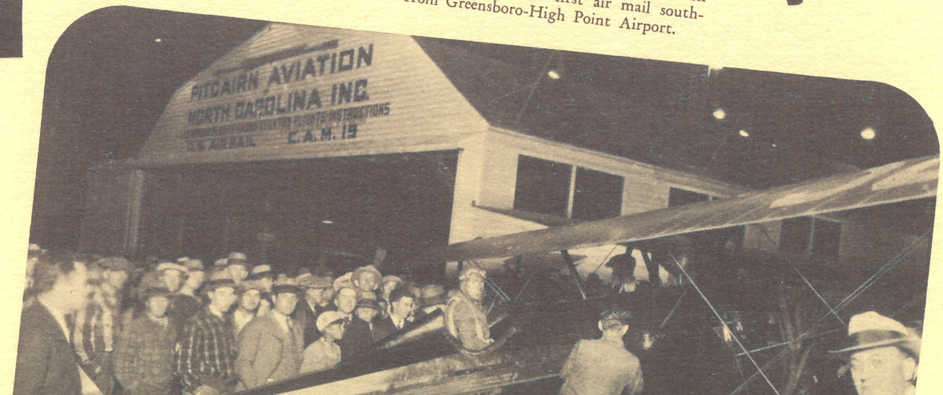




Pilot Eugene R. Brown, one of the original pilots on Atlanta-Richmond line. Flew first air mail southbound from Greensboro-High Point Airport.

stationed at Lindley Field, and
er of the Greensboro-
nt Airport.




PITCAIRN AVIATION
NORTH CAROLINA INC.
U.S. AIR MAIL C.A.M. 19
U.S. MAIL
C.A.M. No 19

First southbound mail flight from Greensboro-High Point Airport. Pilot Gene Brown.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

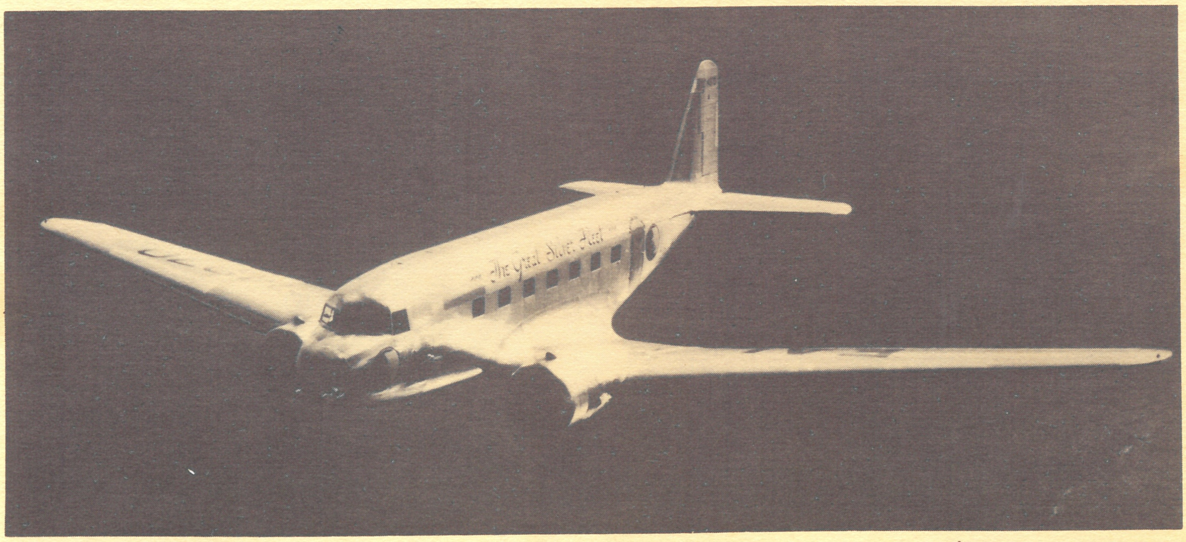
J. W. BURKE

JOE S. HOFFMAN

GEORGE L. STANSBURY
Chairman

R. FLAKE SHAW

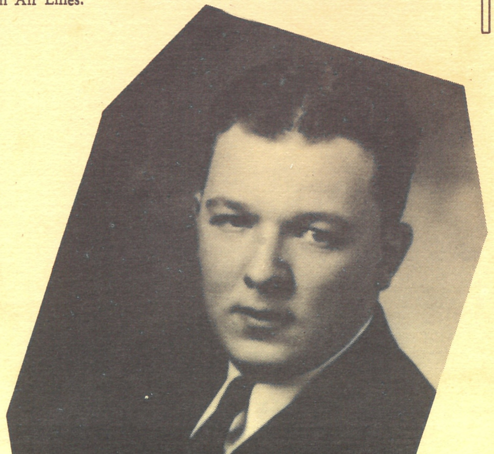
R. C. CAUSEY



Douglas Air Liner. One of The Great Silver Fleet of Eastern Air Lines.

Joint Chairmen Decennial Celebration

JOSEPH T. MARTIN, Greensboro


CHARLES L. KEARNS, High Point

Pitcairn's bid was accepted. Now came many associated cities along the Seaboard to the East — the Tennessee River Valley to the west — no longer adamant, asking, urging, fighting to have Airmail come their way. But the ground work had been carefully laid long before and the Post Office Department defined the "Piedmont Route" via New York-Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington-Richmond-Greensboro-Charlotte-Spartanburg-Greenville to Atlanta.

Then came the need for landing fields. Seven potential sites lying in the triangle between Greensboro, High Point, and Winston-Salem, were surveyed on the ground and from the air. Representatives of the three cities agreed to join on a per capita basis in the purchase and improvement of the site selected by the operators. Lindley Field was chosen.

Bandwagon years — hectic — mad-middle twenties — Florida's dizzy boom — hydrogen welding — cross word puzzles — Leopold-Loeb case — television — talking pictures — dry ice — Rudolph Valentino — Dempsey-Tunney battles — Red Grange — knee length skirts — Scopes trial — Coolidge — "I do not choose to run" — ultra violet rayed foods — great Bull market —the brown derby — success stories — bootlegging — Al Capone — gang war — Sacco-Vanzetti case — sawed off shot guns — racketeers — crash — financial panic — Herbert Hoover — aerial photography — North Pole by Air — the Graf Zeppelin — autogyro.

Paul C. Lindley turned the land over to Guilford County. The County leased it to the City of Greensboro for $1.00 a year — both cooperated in grading, top soiling, and seeding. Pitcairn, Inc., built a hangar. The City built a passenger station. The Government was induced to establish a first order Weather Bureau — later the Department of Commerce set up a "radio beam" station.

May, 1927, Lindley Field was dedicated as the Tri-City Airport and test flights begun. On May 2nd, 1928, the first official scheduled Airmail left Greensboro for New York. The late Sid Malloy was the pilot — a Pitcairn Mailwing was used.

Pitcairn Aviation, Incorporated, sold its mail contract interest to Eastern Air Transport, Inc. Henry W. Rafus leased the field from the city and established the Rafus Flying School.

During 1928 the Dixie Flying Service inaugurated a pasesnger service between Greensboro and Washington via Danville, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville. A trial flight was made on October 21st, 1930, and on November 6th the first paid passenger left Greensboro for Washington. Single motored, six passenger Fokker's were used. Eastern Air Transport had begun test flights for passenger service and on December 11th, 1930, flew the first twin-motored, eight passenger Curtis Kingbird out of Greensboro for Washington. This ship also carried the second mail flight. Then came the first Curtis Condors — twin-motored — fourteen passenger — "bird cages" — April 1st, 1930—and the third scheduled airmail flight.

With airplanes getting bigger and bigger — faster and faster — a field which would accommodate a wing spread of thirty feet and wheel base of 6 feet would not accommodate ships of 100 feet wing

EARLY PASSENGER PERIOD

Bascom Baynes
Gene Brown
Mrs. O. H. Ellison
J. A. Gawthrop
L. H. Hole
E. B. Jeffress
Chas. M. Ketchum
Claude Kiser
Johnny Kytle
Paul C. Lindley
Dick Merrill
Henry Rafus
M. G. Robinson
George L. Stansbury
Ray Warren

EXPANSION PERIOD

Capt. Thomas B. Doe
George Goeghegan
C. A. Hines
E. B. Jeffress
Chas. M. Ketchum
E. H. Parker
W. Y. Preyer
Henry Rafus
C. W. Smedberg
Julius C. Smith
Station W.B.I.G.

spread and wheel base of 12 to 16 feet. The hill, or crown type, field once ideal became obsolete — long paved level runways and intense flood lighting were demanded.

CANCELLATION AND CHAOS

Irving Brower
G. T. Caldwell
George Geoghegan
Frank Hancock
E. B. Jeffress
Andrew Joyner, Jr.
Chas. M. Ketchum
Claude Kiser
Major R. L. Lewis
Paul C. Lindley
J. T. Martin
E. C. McLean
Mary Nicholson
Major R. W. Schroeder
Geo. L. Stansbury
J. F. Stevens
John S. Wynne

In 1931 the "cut off" line from Richmond to Jacksonville was established and the third major Airport in North Carolina was built at Raleigh. By 1933 the Airmail and passenger traffic was growing steadily. Business for the first 6 months of 1932 showed Raleigh 1,944 lbs. mail — Charlotte 6,775 — Greensboro 10,752 — Passengers carried on "cut off"—600; on main line 1,207.

Then suddenly and without warning came the order of the Post Office Department cancelling *all* air mail contracts. The Army, untrained and ill equipped for flying mail, was ordered to displace the private carriers — soldiers all — theirs not to question — they bravely tackled an impossible job — pilots' lives needlessly sacrificed — chaos.

Following two near accidents the Department of Commerce closed Lindley Field for Airmail and Passenger Landings in January, 1935.

MODERNIZATION PERIOD

Miss Harriett Elliott
George Geoghegan
Frank W. Hancock
Vance Jerome
Andrew Joyner, Jr.
Chas. M. Ketchum
L. S. McGinnis
Major Ralph L. Lewis
Mrs. Annie O'Berry
R. B. Page
Col. Jos. Hyde Pratt
Chas. H. Robertson
C. W. Smedberg
Miss Ethel Speas
Geo. L. Stansbury
C. W. Strickland
R. G. Trosper
Wm. B. Umstead
Wm. R. Waldron

Electric refrigeration — iced cars and motor trucks — advertising creating new demands — awakening unknown desires — automatic vending — self serve stores — vitamins — aluminum alloys — sound control — insulation — business machines — women in industry —new type roads — lastex rubber — prefabricated houses — rubber paint — technicolor films — Empire State Building — 44 million tourists — George Washington Bridge — Mahatma Ghandi — Amos 'n Andy — prosperity "just around the corner"— miniature golf craze — Edison's death — five day week — Normandie launched — photo electric cell — windowless factories — unemployment — made work plans. Byrd to South Pole by air — Picard stratosphere flights — Post and Gatty — the Lindbergh kidnapping case — "G Men" — E.R.A. — C.W.A.

Came the announcement that the Federal Government would spend $22,000,000 to develop Aeronautics as a part of the national defense program and to relieve unemployment.

A State Aeronautical Advisory Committee was set up to pass on all Airport projects — (R. B. Page, Wilmington, L. S. McGinnis, Winston-Salem, E. G. Meyers, Raleigh.) Appropriations came through Mrs. Annie O'Berry, State Administrator of C.W.A. — Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem filed simultaneous applications for approximately $100,000 each. Representatives of Advisory Committee counseled Greensboro to amend its application to provide for paved runways. Following protracted delays — technical obstructions (a total of fourteen amended applications were filed under C.W.A.) — C.W.A. project for $250,000 was approved but no money was allocated and no work was done — C.W.A. was officially abandoned — (meantime major projects at Raleigh and Winston-Salem — and subordinate projects at Wilmington and other points in the State had gone forward under C.W.A.) New plans were drawn up under W.P.A. regulations —

more meetings — trips to Raleigh — and Washington — plans approved by Department of Commerce in advance of filing application for W.P.A. funds — Guilford County becomes sponsor for a new W.P.A. application. Finally through sustained cooperation of Hon. Wm. B. Umstead and Hon. Harry Hopkins $267,000 was approved and on November 11th, 1935, the first shovelful of dirt was lifted on a 400,000 cubic yard grading job.

Progress was slow — funds came irregularly — repeatedly resisted proposal to reduce width of runways — to abandon paving altogether — to come within reduced appropriation — more trips to Raleigh, Washington, New York — conferences with operators — Post Office Departments — Department of Commerce — operators.

Guilford County successful in getting approval of a new application for W. P. A. funds supplemented by County grants to construct new administration building — cost $11,500 — work begun March, 1937.

City of Greensboro agrees to proposal of Chamber of Commerce that it surrender its lease on field and give Guilford County title to all its interest therein, including lighting equipment, buildings, etc., Lindley Field officially designated as Greensboro-High Point Airport.

Chamber of Commerce announces May 28th-29th as date for decennial celebration.

April, 1937, Guilford County (by agreeing to make necessary supplemental grants) secures additional $35,000 from W.P.A. to complete field.

Business fights back from depression — technocracy — bank failures — hoarding — bank holiday — repeal of prohibition — "fire side chats". Century of Progress Exposition — A.A.A. "Brain Trusters" — H.O.L.C. —N.R.A. — F.E.R.A. — F.H.A. — C.C.C. — United States off the gold standard — streamlined trains — dust storms — air-conditioning — 200 inch telescope — Phillipine independence — Russia recognized — Will Rogers killed — Diesel tractors and trucks — Supreme Court decisions — "Nine Old Men" — heavy water — Hitler — "the blood purge" — Townsend plan — Haile Selassie — Revolution in Spain — drought — rumors of war — Swing music.

And so the tides and current of achievement have ebbed and flowed throughout this *dynamic decade* but progress has been irresistible — New tides will come — recessions may reoccur. What the next decade holds for us can only be guessed.

Of two things we can be certain — that there will be constant change which will make for progress or decline — that the extent and direction of community growth will be measured by the character and degree of our community spirit — Lindley Field is the physical expression of vision — courage — and cooperative spirit of two unusual cities (Greensboro and High Point) in an extraordinary county (Guilford) — a united community which faces the next decade with heads up, eyes to the front, and unafraid.

RESTORATION PERIOD

J. O. Atkinson, Jr.
Mrs. O. H. Ellison
Josiah W. Bailey
F. J. Bartlett
Dr. F. M. Boldridge
Harllee Branch
Paul Brattain
J. W. Burke
Carolina Aero Club
R. C. Causey
S. A. Cisler
George Coan
J. W. Coleman
C. M. Crawford
E. V. Durham
Burt Eldridge
K. K. Garrett
Geo. Geoghegan
Earl Godbey
C. P. Graddick
Joe Hoffman
Harry Hopkins
E. T. Howard
Carroll Inman
Vance Jerome
Abe Jones
Andrew Joyner, Jr.
Junior Chamber of Commerce
H. W. Kendall
A. H. Kennedy
Chas. M. Ketchum
John Van Lindley
J. T. Martin
Mary Nicholson
Frank Nicholson
G. B. Phillips
Julian Price
Henry Rafus
Chas. H. Robertson
Robert R. Reynolds
Maj. R. W. Schroeder
R. Flake Shaw
C. L. Shuping
C. W. Smedberg
Geo. L. Stansbury
J. F. Stevens
Dr. S. R. Taylor
H. J. Thurman
Wm. B. Umstead
Station WBIG
Wm. R. Waldron
Allen Watkins
Burt Wilder
John A. Womack
John S. Wynne